

FWF GENDER FACT SHEET - PAKISTAN

FACTS & FIGURES

- Human Development Index: 152 of 189 countries (UNDP 2019)
- Gender Inequality Index: 152 of 189 countries (UNDP 2019)
- Global Gender Gap Index: 151 of 153 countries (WEF 2020)
- Violence against women ever experienced, intimate partners: 24.5%
- Child marriage: 21%
- Child labour: 11 million
- Adolescent birth rate: 38.8 per 1,000 births
- Infant mortality rate: 61.2 deaths per 1,000 live births
- Maternal mortality rate: 178 deaths per 100,000 live births
- Mandatory paid maternal leave: 84 days
- Expected years of schooling: 8.5
- Literacy Rate (adult, +15 years old): 57%
- Population with at least some secondary school education: female: 26.7% - male: 47.3%
- Share of seats in parliament held by women: 20%
- Skilled labour force: 27.9%
- Labour force participation rate: female: 23.9% - male: 81.5%
- Estimated gross income per capita (2011 PPP \$): female: 1,570- male: 8,604
- Total unemployment rate (female to male ratio): 2.04
- Population: 212.2 million
- Sex ratio at birth (male to female births): 1.09
- Urban population: 36.7%
- Religion: 97% Muslims, 3% of Christians, Hindus and others
- Ethnic groups: 52% Punjabi, 13.2% Pashtun, 11.7% Sindhi, 7.5% Urdu, 4.3% Balochi, 10.7% others

COUNTRY CONTEXT:

- **Pakistan is an Islamic and federal parliamentary republic with Islam as its state religion;** the country's legal system is a common law system with Islamic law influence.
- Pakistan has struggled throughout its existence to attain political stability and sustained social development.
- **Pakistan population is highly heterogeneous with 5 different ethnic groups.**
- **The family organization is strongly patriarchal,** and most people live with extended families, often in the same house or family compound.
- **Since its independence, Pakistan has been at war.** In 1947-1948, Pakistan and India were in conflict for the control of the Kashmir region; after years of disputes, Kashmir is now divided into macro areas that are controlled by Pakistan and India. Nonetheless, the relations between the two countries are highly unstable.

Economy:

- At the time of independence, the economy of Pakistan was primarily agricultural, but in the last decades it has become considerably diversified. **The agricultural sector contributes one-fifth of GDP; instead, manufacturing provides one-sixth.**

- Trade and services account for the largest component of the economy (60.2% of GDP).
- **The textile sector accounts for the 70% of Pakistan's exports**, and most of its industries are based in Punjab.

The garment industry:

- **In 2017, the garment industry contributed 8.5% to the country's GDP**, accounted for one-fourth of industrial value-added and **employed 40% of the industrial labour force**.
- Even if the garment industry has increased over the past years, it is underperforming relative to its potential, considering that the garment export is a 1.10% compared to 32% of China, 3.81% of India and 5.94% of Vietnam.
- The garment sector was instrumental for job creation. **Despite the fact that men accounted for the two-thirds of all garment job positions, in the last years the industry has started employing more women.**
- The garment industry is dominated by **small enterprises**. Approximately 84% of the garment's workforce is employed in firms where work less than 6 workers. **Women are primarily employed in these small factories that are not even registered as a private company.**
- Poor working conditions characterize the industry for both men and women; **the garment workforce is low-skilled and low-educated (3 in 4 have primary education).**
- Since 2014-2015, living wages have risen but according to a report from ILO (2017) women did not benefit of this increasing as men.
- **In Pakistan, garment workers are required to work long hours with a constant excessive overtime;** working time was quite higher for men (54.3 hours) compared to women (36.6 hours).

Women in the society:

- The status of a woman in Pakistan differs in terms of her class, origin, religion, education, marriage, number of children and so on.
- **The eldest male of a family is the family leader:** he has the right to take all the most important decisions; instead, **women have a secondary role**, having been restricted to take care of the house, of their husbands and children.
- It is not uncommon that wealthy families (and/or landowners) still practice the ***pardah***; **it means** that houses are divided into two sections, one for women and the other for men; as so, **women are secluded from male visitors who are not relatives.**
- **In urban middle-upper class families, the role of women has changed;** they are encouraged to study and to enter in the workforce (in this context the practice of *pardah* is not followed).
- In Pakistan, the *baradari* ("brotherhood) is the most important institution; not only it influenced politics, but *baradari* is discussed when people get married. **According to the tradition, arranged marriages are the norm in Pakistan** (still today marriage based on love are exceptional). **Endogamous marriages are still preferable because it shows the strong bond within a family (marriage is used to create alliances).**
- The Pakistan Association of Anthropology showed that **"People prefer to marry within their caste and family because they are familiar with their customs, traditions, family values and backgrounds.** Mostly in traditional societies through endogamy people secure and grasp the property within their same class group which also give financial surety for their children".

- **Women who are not married when they are 25 years old are considered old:** it is much more difficult to get married after this age, **and unmarried women face discrimination;** for **men** it is more relaxed, but **after 30 years old they are considered old too.**
- Despite the fact that **the practice of dowry was banished in 2020, it still persists.** The *Dowry* describes a transfer for the bride's parents to the groom and his parents when they get married (money, clothes, electronics, furniture...). According to the new law, the allowed dowry will be just clothes (for the bride only) and bed sheets only. In the case of divorce, the groom's side has to return all the gifts and dowry to the girl.
- According to UN Women's Status Report 2016, in Pakistan women from marginalized class are more likely to work from home. **It was estimated that home-based workers women are around 12 million.**

Gender-based violence:

- According to a Thomson Reuters Foundation 2018 survey, **Pakistan is the sixth most dangerous and fourth worst country for women** in terms of economic resources, discrimination, risks from cultural, religious and traditional practices, including the so-called "honour killings". **Pakistan ranked fifth on non-sexual violence, including domestic abuse.**
- In Pakistan, **women and girls aged 10+ spend 19.9% of their time on unpaid care and domestic work compared to 1.8% spent by men.**
- The *dowry* tradition is responsible for **birth preferences** (abortion in case of females or abandonment); having **more than one daughter can be unaffordable** for the poorest families.
- In Pakistan, **73% of men think that it is unacceptable that women have a paid job outside home;** this shows that women are treated as properties.
- A report by The Human Rights Commission of Pakistan reported that **"Women who exercised or attempted to exercise their own choice in partners were subjected to confinement, beatings, and life-ending violence by fathers and brothers.** Rejected suitors exacted their revenge by **violently attacking women,** often with acid to disfigure the women they claimed to want to marry".
- **Unmarried women who work and live alone in another city are discriminated** from house owners who are hesitant to rent out their property to an independent woman.
- Despite the promulgation of Protection against Harassment of women at the Workplace Act in 2010, **women are not aware of what constitutes sexual harassment and of the legal remedies introduced by the government.**
- **Sex outside marriage is prohibited:** having children outside marriage is a taboo. **Hundreds of these children are killed, and they do not have any inheritance right.**
- **Domestic abuse is widespread in Pakistan.** It is often perpetrated by husbands, fathers, brothers and male relatives; in-laws frequently harassed their sons' wives. Women are subjected to many forms of violence, such as beating, physical abuse, rape, acid attacks (disfigurement), hair shavings and homicide.
- According to a survey conducted in 2017/2018, **28% of women age 15-49 have experienced physical violence since age 15,** 6% have experienced sexual violence and 7% of women have experienced violence during pregnancy. 34% of married women have experienced physical, sexual, or emotional violence. The most common is emotional violence (26%), followed by physical violence (23%). 5% have of these have experienced

sexual violence. **56% of women who have experienced any form of violence did not ask for help.**

- Rapes and sexual assaults are higher than **the official statistics that are not reliable because the majority of the victims do not report the abuse.**
- In Pakistan, **a woman can be killed** by a male relative if she is believed to have dishonoured the family ("**honour killing**"); only in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 94 women were killed by close family members - investigations were not carried out properly and the perpetrators were not punished.
- In Pakistan there is no room for any public debate on sexuality; **homosexual relationships are prohibited.**
- **Pakistan has recognised transgender as a third gender category:** the Pakistani Supreme Court ordered the National Database & Registration Authority to insert three columns for gender on the national ID card in November 2009.

LEGAL CONTEXT:

National legislation:

- **The Muslim Family Law of 1961 states that it applies to the whole Pakistan and to all the Muslim citizens of Pakistan** wherever they may be. It regards marriage, polygamy, divorce and maintenance.
- The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, proscribes **the minimum age of marriage for girls as 16 years old and 18 years for boys;** in 2019, there was a pending bill for raising the marriage age for girls to 18, but it did not pass because it was considered "un-Islamic"; **The 2014 Sindh Child Marriage Restraint Act sets 18 as the legal age of marriage for both girls and boys in Sindh Province.**
- The law entitles **female** children to **one-half the inheritance of male children.** Wives inherit one-eighth of their husbands' properties;
- **Abortion is permitted with strict limitations:** when the life of a woman is in danger or she is required to undergo treatment; outside of these permissions, the sanction is imprisonment.
- **Adultery is punishable with stone to death or 100 lashes; sexual intercourse between unmarried people is punished with imprisonment and a fine.**
- The Domestic Violence Bill of 2012 makes violence against women and children an offence, punishable by time in jail and imposition of fines.
- **Marital rape is punishable with death by hanging or up to 25 years in prison.**
- The 2011 Prevention of Anti-women Practices Act, and **the 2016 Criminal Law Amendment Act criminalize acts committed against women in the name of traditional practices.**
- Article 25 of the Constitution states the right to equality before the law and prohibition of discrimination on the grounds of sex alone. Article 37(e) establishes just and humane conditions of work, adding that children and women are not employed if the job activity is unsuited to their age or sex, and maternity benefits for women.
- **The Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act of 2010 introduced the definition of harassment at the workplace as an offence.**
- The Industrial and Commercial Employment Ordinance of 1968 applies to all industrial and commercial establishments employing 20 or more workers and provides for security

of employment; those who work in other establishments, domestic servants, farm workers or casual labour engaged by contractors are not covered under this law.

- In a seasonal factory, worker should not work more than 50 hours per week and no more than 10 hours per day (it includes manufacturing industries).
- The Maternity Benefit Ordinance of 1958 establishes that after four months of employment, **a worker is entitled to 6 weeks prenatal and postnatal paid leave**: it is applicable **to all industrial and commercial establishments employing women, excluding the tribal areas**. There are several restrictions on the dismissal of the woman during maternity leave.
- Article 11 of the Constitution **prohibits the employment of children below the age of 14 years in any factory, mine or other hazardous employment** (they cannot work for more than 5 hours per day and they are precluded to work in factories between 7 p.m. and 5 a.m.).
- Freedom of association, registration of trade unions and strikes are ensured by the Constitution and the Labour Ordinance (strikes are illegal if the procedure established in the law is not respected).

International legislation:

- **In 1996, Pakistan adopted the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)**; in 1990, it also adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

SOURCES:

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